



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

****NEWS RELEASE****

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Wisconsin AP participation continues to climb

MADISON—More Wisconsin students took Advanced Placement courses last school year than in the prior year with participation by students of color increasing 27.7 percent from the previous year. The biggest jumps in participation were for African-American students, 50.7 percent, and American Indian students, 39.3 percent.

A record 17,768 state public school students took 27,768 Advanced Placement (AP) exams, offered through The College Board, during the 2003-04 school year. In the previous school year, 16,034 Wisconsin public school students took 25,141 AP exams. Nationally, 912,733 public school students took 1,557,951 exams. Students earning a grade of 3-5 on the exams are eligible for college-level credit at most colleges and universities. In 2004, 68.6 percent of Wisconsin public school students earned passing scores compared to 68.0 percent in 2003. Nationally in 2004, 59.7 percent of public school students passed their AP exams.

2004 AP Program		
	Wisconsin	Nation
Number of Candidates	17,768	912,733
Number of Exams	27,984	1,557,951
Number of Grades 3-5	19,184	929,814
Percent Earning Grades of 3-5	68.6	59.7

“We can be proud that so many of our students made the extra effort to take Advance Placement classes, because it shows their dedication to academic studies that will help them succeed in postsecondary education. College admissions committees view coursework as a key indicator of academic motivation and achievement,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. “We must increase access to AP classes to all parts of Wisconsin.”

The state superintendent’s proposed 2005-07 education budget includes a provision to provide incentive grants to the 25 percent of public high schools that do not provide AP classes because of small school enrollments or lack of AP-qualified teachers. “Our goal is to continue working with partners in the Wisconsin education community through distance learning, on-line delivery, and other support and outreach methods to make Advanced Placement coursework available to any student who wants to take the classes,” Burmaster said.

(more)

Students of color represented 8.2 percent of all public school test-takers, up about 1 percent from 2003. Passing rates ranged from 70.0 percent for Asian students, the highest rate for all student groups who identified their race, to 25.1 percent for African-American students.

“The achievement gap is apparent,” Burmaster noted. “As we increase participation, we must continue our efforts to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, receive the academic foundation and have the opportunity to succeed in AP courses and postsecondary studies.”

U.S. History was the most popular AP course in Wisconsin with 4,063 public school students taking the class. Next in popularity was English Literature and Composition taken by 3,929 public school AP students. The highest passing rates occurred in European History (81.9 percent) and Calculus BC (81.8 percent).

In its first “Advanced Placement Report to the Nation,” a new analysis of the AP program released Tuesday, Jan. 25, The College Board reported the number of graduates who took an AP course during their high school career as a percentage of all graduates. This is a change from previous reports that looked at AP participation and passing rates.

For 2004, Wisconsin had 12,286 graduates take at least one AP course during high school, which was 20.0 percent of all graduates. With a grade of 3 or higher being described as “college-level mastery of an AP course,” 13.7 percent of Wisconsin public school graduates passed at least one AP exam during high school. Nationally, 558,993 public school graduates took an AP course during high school with 13.2 percent of all graduates earning at least one passing grade on an AP exam.

“Students who attempt this rigorous coursework benefit from the exposure to college-level instruction and subject matter,” Burmaster said. “Making AP available at every public high school and increasing participation rates among all student groups is an important step in our efforts to close the achievement gap.”

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ATTACHMENT: Tables that provide additional background about Advanced Placement in Wisconsin are attached.

AP Report to the Nation		
Public School Students		
	Class of	
Wisconsin	2000	2004
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	8,907	12,286
Percent Taking an AP Exam	15.2	20.0
Percent Earning Grades of 3-5	10.5	13.7
Nation		
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	405,475	558,993
Percent Taking an AP Exam	15.9	20.9
Percent Earning Grades of 3-5	10.2	13.2

2004 Advanced Placement in Wisconsin

AP Participation by Racial/Ethnic Group

Public School Students

	Candidates		Percent Increase in Participation
	2003	2004	
African American	221	333	50.7
American Indian	56	78	39.3
Asian	564	680	20.6
Hispanic*	305	373	22.3
White	14,463	15,796	9.2
Other	218	238	9.2
Not Stated	207	270	30.4
Total	16,034	17,768	10.8

* Includes Chicano/Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Other Hispanic

AP Program Participation 2000-2004

Public School Students

Wisconsin	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of Candidates	12,604	13,736	14,882	16,034	17,768
Number of Exams	19,012	20,815	22,850	25,141	27,984
Number of Grades 3-5	12,918	13,538	15,905	17,099	19,184
Percent Earning Grades of 3-5	67.9	65.0	69.6	68.0	68.6

2004 AP Results for Selected Examinations

Public School Students

Examination	Candidates	Number Earning Grades 3-5	Percent Earning Grades 3-5
Biology	2,024	1,237	61.1
Chemistry	1,165	737	63.3
English Language and Composition	2,145	1,470	68.5
English Literature and Composition	3,929	2,692	68.5
History: European	910	745	81.9
History: United States	4,063	2,516	61.9
Mathematics: Calculus AB	3,284	2,221	67.6
Mathematics: Calculus BC	861	704	81.8
Mathematics: Statistics	853	599	70.2
Psychology	2,942	2,383	81.0
U.S. Government and Politics	1,179	722	61.2